

# Ellis Island Oral Interview

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Education Department  
Ellis Island Immigration Museum  
Statue of Liberty National Monument



**Interviewee: William Greiner**

Date of Birth: July 18, 1912

Date of Interview: March 3, 1991

Interviewer: Paul E. Sigrist, Jr.

Immigrated from Italy (on German Quota) at Age 12 in 1925

Ellis Island Collection: EI-28

## **Greiner (The Voyage):**

It's hard for people to understand today what it was like to be on a boat then in a storm like that. Tremendous noise. It sounded as if the boat was heading for some rocks. The great waves would smash, the noise tremendous, and I thought we would flounder at any moment. They posted Morse Code, messages received from other ships in the ocean, sending "S.O.S. We are floundering!" and so on, "Help!" and the captain let us know that he couldn't get out of the way. They were hard pressed, too. So they wanted to get to New York as soon as possible... all the other people were so sick. But I get over very quickly any sickness. I would go up on the captain's deck and I enjoyed this wild sight, and especially looking at the prow of the ship going way, way down under the sea and then lifting up. And the waves coming, rushing right up to the captain's...to live...that's a terrifying scene but, as a boy, I enjoyed it.